

# Washington Scene

By George Dixon

## \$5000 Status Symbol

THERE ARE MANY status symbols in Washington, but the greatest, the absolute ultimate for a Cabinet or sub-Cabinet officer is a private powder room. An official may have title, power and pelf, but without this prestige marker he is as nothing in the eyes of bureaucracy.



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Thus we can sympathize with Under Secretary of Commerce Edward Gudeman because he was the only personage of sub-Cabinet rank deprived of this badge of distinction.

Mr. Gudeman brooded. The discrimination not only set him apart from all other under secretaries, but subjected him to a long, exhausting walk of almost 20 paces down the hall.

He hounded Secretary of Commerce Luther H. Hodges with pitiful complaints about the unfairness of it all. Finally Hodges could withstand it no longer and ordered a private retreat installed for Gudeman at a cost of somewhat more than \$5000.

FOR WEEKS the din of jackhammers distracted policy planning on the sacrosanct fifth floor at Commerce where the hierarchy is officed. Finally the status symbol was completed.

By sheer coincidence it was finished on the day that Secretary Hodges gave a party for the secretaries to secretaries — the sargent ladies, who, if the commercial interests of the Nation but knew it, really run Commerce.

When the revels of the departmental beauty and chivalry finally ran its course, Peggy Tyler, personal secretary to Secretary Hodges, called for silence. In a magnificent speech, overflowing with flowery phrases, she presented Under Secretary Gudeman with a gold key to his new room.

Gudeman accepted the key in an acceptance speech that ranked with many I have heard at national political conventions. The Under Secretary took the key and unlocked the new emblem of his status.

He almost swooned, because out of it spilled 15 laughing, shrieking, secretarial ladies who had jammed themselves into it, heaven knows how—including his own private secretary, Margaret McKeown.

JAMES B. DONOVAN, the personable Democratic gentleman who is battling Republican Jacob K. Javits for Senator from New York, came to Washington the other day to receive the official blessing from President Kennedy. It was readily and earnestly given. Then Mr. Donovan did the thing

traditional with visitors seeking high public office. He joined a group of newspapermen for lunch at the National Press Club.

I asked Mr. Donovan if anything amusing had befallen him in his quest for the senatorship. He replied that he didn't know whether it could be classified as amusing, but he had just received a letter from Senator Javits' brother, Ben, in which Ben said he was personally trying to raise \$500,000 for Brother Jake and already had \$100,000 in the till.

Ben Javits informed his brother's foe that he needed help to raise his quota and was sure Donovan would like to help.

"Ben made quite a case for the re-election of Jake," recounted Mr. Donovan. "He wrote that few men have such a grasp of Western civilization."

"That is encouraging, because I understand Western civilization is pretty hard to grasp," I agreed. "What answer did you make the Brother Ben?"

"I informed him," replied Mr. Donovan, "that I was very impressed at just one man of many having a personal fund-raising goal of \$500,000—especially as all I had spent in my primary campaign was \$165. Then I postscripted that I would like to help him out, but that due to a possible conflict of interest I had better not."

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